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Educational Writings

I. BOOK NOTES AND REVIEWS¹

Discourses on the aims of college education.—Among the presidents of our higher institutions of learning, Dr. Charles Franklin Thwing,² of Western Reserve University, is one of the most prolific writers. To his already long list of some twenty books on college subjects, he now adds another, *The College Gateway*. The volume contains fifteen baccalaureate sermons delivered between the years 1903 and 1918. An idea of the contents of the book may be gathered from a selection of chapter headings: "Entering into Life," "Sympathy, the Solution of the Social Problem," "Some Rewards of College Training," "The American College Student and the Universities of the World," "College Life a Prophecy of Life Itself," and "The Effects of the War on College Women."

President Thwing is recognized as one of the staunch defenders of the literary college. At a time when critics are predicting the disintegration of this institution, are pointing out the professionalization of a large portion of the student body and the aimlessness and idleness of a good share of the rest, are noting the independent organization of professional departments and the development of independence in some that are not professional, Mr. Thwing pleads the case for the college with undiminished optimism.

Whatever be one's attitude toward the contentions of the critics, it requires an idealist of some calibre to claim the following educational values for the average American college training:

"The college graduate is trained to reason; to find sound premises; to rise through logical processes from these premises to correct conclusions. He is trained to detect and discard fallacies. He knows that the terms of reasoning should be exact; that the middle term should be always distributed, and the conclusion should contain no more and no less than the premises. His study of formal logic has helped him to rational processes. His study of the ancient classics has given him discrimination, judiciousness, judicialness.

¹ Reviews contributed by F. S. Breed where not otherwise indicated.

² CHARLES FRANKLIN THWING, *The College Gateway*. Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1918
Pp. 277. \$1.50.

His study of mathematics has trained in him a sense of the certainty of absolute truth, as the study of all human sciences has given him a sense of the uncertainty of all truth which is not absolute. Economics has taught him the complexity of human phenomena, history the vastness and variety of human experience, and philosophy the mysteriousness of his own existence. Literature of every order and age has trained him into appreciations, intellectual and ethical." [p. 82.]

Ethically and religiously, the book is safe and inspiring. High-school teachers can find many suggestions in the discourses for talks to pupils on the aims of college education.

An anthology of the molders of French educational thought.—This is a volume which aims to "portray to American readers the fundamental ideals on which the French system of education is grounded." While attending the International Congress on Education held at Oakland, California, in 1915, M. Ferdinand Buisson and Mr. F. E. Farrington¹ noticed to what extent the educators of their respective countries were uninformed of each other's ideals. Accordingly they conceived the plan of editing two volumes of selections, one from representative French educators for American readers, and the other from representative American educators for French readers. *French Educational Ideals of Today*, recently published by the World Book Company, represents the American part of the plan. The fifty-four selections in the book are gathered from some thirty-four French writers, many of them persons of great distinction. The topics are scattered over a wide range, from the infant school to the lycée. The casual American reader will be impressed by the prominence of the religious problem in the book, the intense belief in moral instruction, the repeated emphasis on disciplinary values, the marked interest in civic education, and the splendid patriotic fervor everywhere.

The strong disciplinary trend in the thinking represented in the book is well brought out in a selection from Louis Liard on "The Place of Science in Secondary Education." It sounds very like a passage from President Eliot advocating reform in secondary education or voicing a defense of Mr. Flexner's modern school. Liard says, "It seems to me easy to avoid these obstacles, if one is convinced that the teaching of the natural sciences in the lycée should be an educational discipline, and not a burdening of the memory. First, accurate perception of facts will cultivate the faculty of observation; then, comparison of facts will cultivate the faculty of comparison; finally,

¹ FERDINAND BUISSON and FREDERIC ERNEST FARRINGTON, *French Educational Ideals of Today*. Yonkers-on-Hudson, New York: World Book Co., 1919. Pp. xii + 326. \$2.25.